

Chapter 3

Urban Threat

. . . [T]he United States could be forced to intervene in unexpected crises against opponents with a wide range of capabilities. Moreover, these interventions may take place in distant regions where urban environments, other complex terrain, and varied climatic conditions present major operational challenges.

Quadrennial Defense Review Report, 30 September 2001

As the strategic environment has become less stable, more uncertain, and more dangerous, Army forces are trained and ready to address urban threats. These threats range from regional conventional military forces, paramilitary forces, guerrillas, and insurgents to terrorists, criminal groups, and angry crowds. Although uncertain about events, Army forces can be clear about trends. Increasingly, the Army will face threats that severely differ in doctrine, organization, and equipment, yet can fully interact with the three other components of the urban battlefield—terrain, society, and infrastructure. In stability operations and support operations, commanders broaden their concept of the threat to include natural disasters, hunger and starvation, and rampant disease. Further, commanders plan to contend with many passive urban threats, such as psychological illnesses and toxic industrial materials (TIM). These threats may be found in isolation, but most likely commanders will encounter them in various combinations. Moreover, each new threat will pose a different combination and likely have new capabilities that previous opponents lacked.

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ASYMMETRY

3-1. An emphasis on asymmetric means to offset United States (US) military capability has emerged as a significant trend among potential threats and become an integral part of the threat principles and tactics discussed below. Asymmetry results when one opponent has dissimilar capabilities—values, organization, training, or equipment—that the other cannot counter. It is not a new concept. It naturally evolves from a sound mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, time available, civil considerations (METT-TC) analysis by an intelligent, freethinking, and adaptive threat. These asymmetric approaches will include the most advanced, commercially-available technology innovatively applied and mixed with crude, simple, and unsophisticated weapons, tactics, techniques, and procedures.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

3-2. A chief asymmetric means of engaging the national power of the US is to employ weapons of mass destruction (WMD) against the US or its allies. These weapons can be used against military forces by military forces and include high-yield explosives as well as nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Operations in urban areas may require concentrating forces and may create a lucrative target for a threat that possesses fewer numbers and less equipment.

3-3. A threat's WMD use will adversely affect the Army's abilities to conduct urban operations (UO) to various degrees. For example, the intervening structures and the effects of urban microclimates complicate the ability to detect and identify radiological, chemical, or biological attacks from a standoff distance. Also, the individual soldier's ability to recognize his leaders, understand oral and visual commands, and operate increasingly sophisticated equipment is difficult when wearing protective clothing and equipment—particularly if his training proficiency is low. Despite the increased challenges and complexity, Army forces have the training and equipment necessary to respond to such an attack compared to most armies around the world, but certainly when compared to the civilian sector.

3-4. Although initial casualties could be high, the public can accept military casualties before those of civilians. Therefore, threats may gain an initial tactical advantage but would achieve less asymmetric benefit by directly attacking Army forces. They may attempt to achieve an extraordinary asymmetric strategic advantage by employing WMD against US or allied civilian populations. In doing so, threats hope to use political sensitivity to high civilian casualties to reduce popular support for the US or its allies. The chance of these attacks occurring in an urban area increases because—

- The area facilitates weapons' effects and camouflages delivery means.
- The dense civilian population ensures a high casualty rate.
- The attack (or even the threat of attack) often will receive more publicity and public attention.
- The urban area's infrastructure is especially vulnerable to WMD, particularly the systems of the economics and commerce infrastructure located in large urban areas, and may have far-reaching national and global effects.

THREAT OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

3-5. The threat may apply several key operational principles to oppose Army forces operating in an urban environment (see Figure 3-1). These principles focus more on how a threat might fight in an urban area rather than specifically whom the threat might be or in what region of the world the conflict might occur. They are more effective in an urban environment due to—

- The high costs in time, material, and manpower involved in UO.
- The limiting effects of urban areas on many technological advantages.
- The proximity of airfields and ports to urban areas.
- The potential moral dilemmas created by exposing numerous civilians to harm or injury.

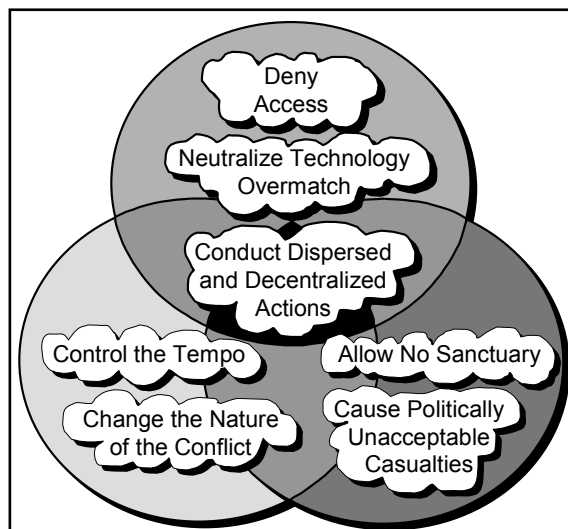


Figure 3-1. Threat Operational Principles

These principles complement and overlap each other; however, at their core is the need to defeat an enemy of superior numbers, technology, or both.

DENY ACCESS

3-6. The Army may not be located where future conflicts are fought. Thus, the Army maintains the ability to rapidly project and sustain combat power over long distances and time spans. This capability demands that Army forces quickly gain and maintain control of seaports or aerial ports of embarkation or debarkation, particularly where the density of US basing and en route infrastructure is low. Commanders gain control of these ports by unopposed (assisted or unassisted) or forcible entry operations. In either case, these phased-entry operations may present potential vulnerabilities, particularly—

- Unsuitable composition of initial or early entry forces lacking necessary combat power for immediate decisive operations.
- Initial command and control difficulties and an immature situational understanding.
- Lack of developed theater support.

3-7. Consequently, threats may attack during initial force projection operations to oppose, disrupt, or prevent the build-up of essential combat power into a theater of operations. These attacks may occur anywhere deploying Army forces are located, at overseas bases, at home stations, and even in military communities. Increasingly, deployment facilities such as airfields and ports exist as integral components of urban areas. Threats will invariably use the complex and concealing nature of these urban areas, coupled with the vulnerabilities, to create favorable conditions for their attacks.

NEUTRALIZE TECHNOLOGY OVERMATCH

3-8. Threats will always strive to force engagements at a time and place most advantageous to them. They may locate military forces and vital military capabilities in urban areas to achieve sanctuary from the effects of Army capabilities and make Army forces and systems more vulnerable to less-sophisticated weapons.

3-9. The clutter of the physical structures, electromagnetic radiation, and population diminishes Army capabilities. This clutter makes it difficult for Army forces to acquire and effectively engage targets at long ranges. In urban areas, the terrain often allows a threat to operate in closer proximity to friendly forces. Therefore, the threat may “hug” friendly forces to avoid the effects of high-firepower standoff weapon systems and degrade their ability to gain or maintain a thorough common operational picture. Additionally, this threat tactic attempts to inhibit friendly commanders from employing some weapon systems and munitions for fear of fratricide.

CONTROL THE TEMPO

3-10. Threats will try to achieve a decisive advantage by setting and controlling the tempo necessary to achieve their objectives. To prevent the Army’s entry into theater, threats may try to create a high operational tempo to take advantage of the inherent weaknesses in power projection operations outlined earlier. As other efforts deny entry, threats may seize the initiative, achieve surprise, and exploit the tempo differential by attacking with heavy conventional forces potentially possessing greater firepower and more rapid ground mobility than the Army’s initial-entry forces.

3-11. If they cannot deny entry or end the conflict quickly, threats may use any preparations made in the initial high-tempo period to prolong the event, aiming to degrade US or allied commitment. The complex nature of the urban environment slows operations conducted in and around these areas. Threats may maximize this characteristic by fighting for key urban complexes and infrastructure, forcing friendly forces to operate within these areas. If Army operations focus on one or more urban areas, the overall campaign slows. However, even when UO make up only one component of a much larger campaign, they may consume valuable resources needed for other operations and delay the entire campaign.

Tempo

The battle for Aachen, Germany, in the fall of 1944, developed during the US First Army’s offensive to breach the Westwall fortifications. Aachen, the ancient capital of Charlemagne, had symbolic political and psychological significance for the Germans and Americans. Furthermore, it was the first city on German soil to face an assault by the Allies. Consequently, the symbolic importance of this first major battle in Germany ensured bitter resistance against American attackers. The Germans surrendered only after the city was destroyed. Expected to take a few days, instead, the battle took weeks. Although the Army had achieved a clear tactical victory, the German defense of Aachen cost the First Army valuable time and resources, and delayed the planned attack to the Rhine River.

CHANGE THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT

3-12. Threats may attempt to change the fundamental nature of the urban conflict to exploit ambiguous or tenuous political-military objectives. Many nations gain and maintain domestic popular support to use their armies for political objectives. The threat may attempt to change the nature of the conflict by modifying its strategy and tactics, the environment, or any combination, ultimately hoping to reduce friendly popular support. For example, introducing an urban terrorist threat to US civilians or soldiers not directly engaged in operations changes the nature of the conflict. This type of threat may not have been an initial consideration, and this change may reverse public support for the operation. Another example, growing US coalition combat power may cause the threat to switch from open maneuver warfare to UO to avoid decisive combat with superior forces and achieve a stalemate. Originally expecting a quick solution or victory, the political leadership may now envision a longer deployment with less chance of lasting success.

CAUSE POLITICALLY UNACCEPTABLE CASUALTIES

3-13. Threat forces may gain an advantage against superior friendly forces by capitalizing on a perceived weakness of many Western nations: the inability to endure continuous losses or casualties for other than vital national interests or losses for which they are psychologically unprepared. A secondary US interest may equate to national survival on the part of a threat. Therefore, the threat (particularly with fanatical leadership) may willingly sacrifice excessive amounts of money, equipment, and people (soldiers and civilians) to achieve victory. Threats may attempt to weaken US resolve and national will to sustain the deployment or conflict by inflicting highly visible, embarrassing, and if possible, large losses on Army forces, even at the cost of similar losses to themselves. Many threat forces will use UO to inflict mass casualties and destroy premier Army weapon and information systems. The physical characteristics of the urban environment support these ambush techniques. Light infantry or insurgents with readily obtainable, hand-held antiarmor weapons can effectively attack armored vehicles and helicopters, no matter how sophisticated, in an urban area.

ALLOW NO SANCTUARY

3-14. Threats will attempt to deny Army forces safe haven anytime and anywhere. Terrorism may be one of the tactics used to deny sanctuary to Army forces. They will attack Army forces anywhere, particularly while operating in urban areas where the fear from being attacked from any quarter is often greater. Threats may be or employ state-sponsored or independent terrorists, well equipped and motivated to accomplish their assigned missions.

3-15. Military buildings, facilities, and installations in urban areas are particularly vulnerable to high-yield explosive munitions as well as other clever means to create large explosions. The close-in nature of urban areas, large populations, and high volume of vehicle traffic provide a good environment for target reconnaissance, explosives positioning (conventional or high-yield), and cover for an attack. These attacks will likely be preceded by extensive, careful reconnaissance, necessitating a solid friendly counterterrorism and counterintelligence effort.

CONDUCT DISPERSED AND DECENTRALIZED OPERATIONS

3-16. To a certain extent, dispersed and decentralized operations are an integral part of all threat principles. However, this concept warrants separate emphasis as a principle since threat forces will likely place great significance on it on future urban battlefields. Both dispersed and decentralized approaches seek to reduce threat vulnerabilities to air power and precision-guided munitions (PGM) while increasing their agility, flexibility, and overall maneuverability in an urban environment.

3-17. Urban terrain tends to fragment and separate forces that operate in it. Threat forces recognize this characteristic, accept it, and make it work to their advantage. They conduct operations from dispersed urban locations to reduce their vulnerability to friendly decisive operations and massed firepower. Although separated, threat forces will attempt to retain the ability to assemble and mass quickly so to strike as opportunities present themselves. Once threat forces complete the operation, they will return to separate locations to avoid potential counterattack. The fluidity and seemingly disjointed appearance of these threat UO will challenge friendly efforts to conduct templating and pattern analysis. Ambushes (air and ground) will be used to deny friendly ground and air reconnaissance of their dispersed locations.

3-18. Dispersed operations normally depend on good command and control to achieve synchronization and massed effects. Threat forces also understand the debilitating effects of the urban terrain on communications and the execution of operations. When they cannot mass their forces or effects, they will depend on decentralized operations to achieve their objectives. They will operate autonomously, guided only by a higher authority's purpose and intent. These operations make them even less vulnerable to massed attacks and PGM as smaller threat forces do not present an objective or target that will allow friendly decisive operations. Again, pattern analysis and templating will be extremely difficult. Using this principle often prolongs the conflict but is central to implementing the other threat principles.

URBAN THREAT TACTICS

3-19. Urban areas provide a casualty-producing and stress-inducing environment ideally suited for using specific urban threat tactics. Moreover, urban areas provide threats with an unmatched degree of cover and concealment from friendly information and firepower systems. While active urban threats may vary widely, many techniques will be common to all. Figure 3-2 outlines a set of threat tactics available to potential threats opposing mission accomplishment in urban areas. *Army forces may use many of the threat tactics, except those that violate the law, ethics, and morals, to defeat urban threats.* Moreover, using asymmetric means is not the sole domain of the threat. Army commanders can also leverage capabilities, create conditions, and plan operations to develop asymmetric advantages to accomplish the mission.

USE THE POPULATION TO ADVANTAGE

3-20. Many urban areas may be too large to evacuate completely (if at all). Even if desirable, a military force may have no place to safeguard and secure the inhabitants. Therefore, future UO may see large segment of the populace

remain. Offensive and defensive operations may be constrained not only by the terrain and by the presence of many civilians. Army forces involved in urban stability operations and support operations will certainly conduct missions in and amongst the residents. These residents may restrict operations and, when gathered in large numbers, may (even without initial hostile intent) present a critical force protection issue for the commander.

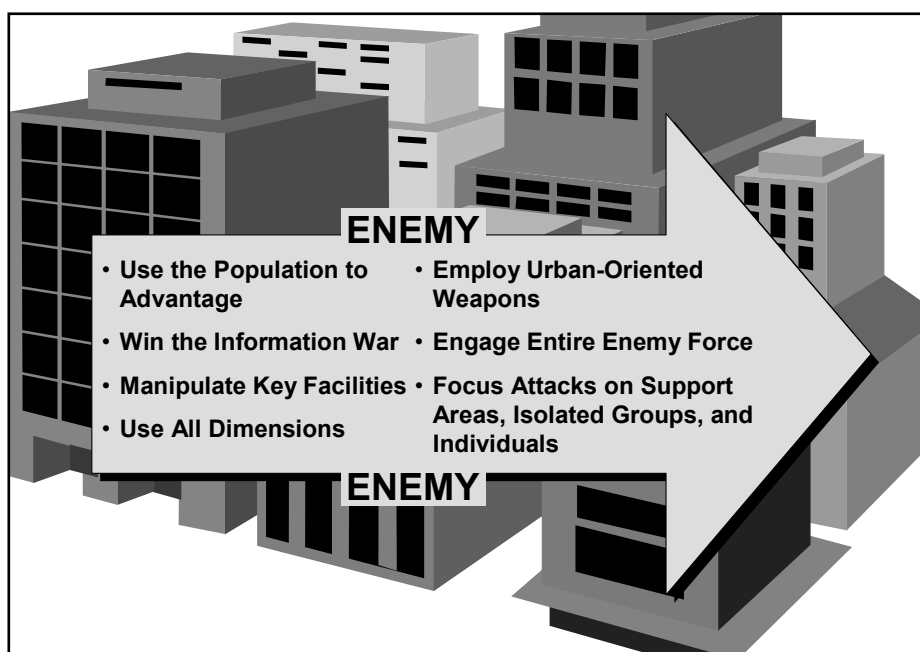


Figure 3-2. Urban Threat Tactics

Use as Key Terrain and Concealment

3-21. From the threat standpoint, the populace is similar to key terrain: the side that manages it best has an advantage. Threat forces may gain this advantage by using civilians as camouflage, concealment, and a means of deception. Guerrilla and terrorist elements may look no different from any other member of the community.

Many foreign conventional and paramilitary troops often have a “civilian” look. Western military forces originally adopted the clean-shaven and close-cut hair standards to combat disease and infection, but future opponents may not adhere to those standards. They may adopt grooming standards, civilian-looking clothing, and other “nonmilitary” characteristics to make themselves indistinguishable from the civilians.

Chechen fighters sometimes disguised themselves as Red Cross workers, donning the identifying armbands. They also passed themselves off as civilians and offered to guide Russian forces through the city, instead leading them into ambushes.

Olga Oliker
Russia's Chechen Wars 1994-2000

Identifying Soldiers from Civilians

During Russia's 1994-95 conflict with Chechnya, Russian forces had difficulty identifying Chechen guerrilla forces from Grozny's noncombatant population. Because their appearance was identical to that of the urban populace, Chechen soldiers could freely walk around the city, suddenly disappear, and then abruptly reappear firing their weapons from basements, windows, or dark alleyways. To distinguish fighters from peaceful city dwellers, Russian forces began looking at men's shoulders to see if they were bruised (from firing weapons) and their forearms to see if there was burned hair or flesh (from the extraction of cartridges). They closely examined their clothing and smelled for gunpowder residue. To identify a Chechen artilleryman, Russian soldiers checked for glossy spots left by artillery and mortar rounds on the bends and cuffs of sleeves. They also turned pockets inside out to check for a shiny, silvery-lead hue indicating the former presence of small arms ammunition. Russian forces also recognized a grenade launcher operator or mortar man from fibers and crumpled pieces of gun cotton on their clothing. US Army commanders may need to develop similar, imaginative means to identify the threat.

Gain Cover, Protection, and Increased Mobility

3-22. Threat forces may attempt to gain cover by using the urban inhabitants as human shields. With this increase in protection, they simultaneously increase their mobility. They recognize the Army's focus on developing and applying rules of engagement (ROE). They will take advantage of the restraining effects of international law and the Army ethical values to enhance their mobility in proximity to friendly positions. Knowing the Army's reluctance to cause noncombatant casualties and collateral damage, threats may operate in areas containing civilians and essential facilities to restrict the Army's use of massed or nonprecision firepower. They may also employ "rent-a-crowds"—civilians paid to demonstrate against military forces—armed only with sticks, stones, and Molotov cocktails (a potential asymmetric challenge).

Make Moral Responsibilities a Weakness

3-23. Depending on their successes, threats may use these tactics and skillful information operations that attack national will and coalition sensitivities in an attempt to force the Army to establish more restrictive ROE. Threat forces may also take advantage of the Army's moral responsibilities. By herding refugees into friendly controlled areas, threat forces try to make the civilians a burden on the Army's logistic and security resources. Threat forces, on the other hand, may not abide by international agreements, such as the Geneva conventions. They may not take prisoners unless they can be ransomed or made part of a local prisoner exchange. They may even execute friendly prisoners in front of the media to show their "strength" and, more importantly, to cause friendly forces to overreact and lose their legitimacy. Threat forces can then use such an overreaction to unite others with their cause.

Acquire Intelligence and Logistic Support

3-24. Indigenous threat forces can normally use the local population for intelligence and logistic support far more effectively than can an alien army.

Threat forces may manipulate local hires serving among US soldiers, such as those contracted by the Army for base operation purposes or translator duties. In addition, refugees moving through friendly controlled sectors may provide the threat with information on friendly dispositions, readiness, and intent. Even friendly residents may become unwitting or unwilling informants, providing an enemy or a hostile with vital information on friendly activities, dispositions, and capabilities. However, a threat employing particularly cruel, abusive, or repressive measures may easily turn certain groups in the urban area against them, even when they share a common history, culture, and ethnicity with the civilians. This is more likely in those areas with high population densities.

3-25. Threat forces may also seek to use some nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). They may try to obtain relief supplies either through the organizations' legitimate relief operations or as a target for theft. Some organizations may even be fronts for weapons, food, ammunition, money, and fighters. For example, during Russia's second conflict in Chechnya (1999-2000), documents purportedly found in Grozny by the Russians listed nations such as Sudan, Nigeria, Niger, and Ivory Coast as sending fighters to Chechnya under the guise of the International Islamic Relief Organization. (Chechen fighters also disguised themselves as Red Cross workers.) This deception increases the need for strict security and force protection measures, close coordination with NGOs operating in urban areas, and closer monitoring of suspect organizations' activities by civil affairs personnel.

WIN THE INFORMATION WAR

3-26. Threat forces will try to win the information war as much as they will directly oppose Army UO. Threat urban campaigns need not be tactical military successes. They need only to weaken legitimacy and make the opposition's campaign appear unpalatable to domestic and world support. As a critical part of their overall information operations, threats will use the ever-present media to tell their story. Portable video cameras, commercial radios, and cellular telephones, available and easily concealed, will be as important to many threat actors as weapons and ammunition. Internet access, already firmly established in many urban areas, provides the means to easily disseminate threat propaganda, misinformation, and disinformation through web sites and electronic mail. Hackers, covered and concealed in the interior spaces of the urban area, may gain access to US sites to manipulate information to the threat's advantage.

Information and the Media

The media coverage of the urban battle for Hue, South Vietnam, although only one of hundreds of different attacks of the Tet Offensive, affected the will of both the American people and their political leadership. On January 31, 1968, two North Vietnamese Army (NVA)/Vietcong (VC) regiments and two sapper battalions, moving rapidly and with the element of surprise, attacked and seized part of the walled city (Citadel) of Hue. It was the third largest city in South Vietnam, the former capital of a united Vietnam, the capital of Thua Thien province, and a spiritual and cultural center. Initially intending to hold the city for

seven days, the NVA/VC retained portions of the city for approximately three weeks against determined US and South Vietnamese attempts to retake it.

Hue marked a revolution in the coverage of war by modern media. It was the first time Americans could sit at home and watch an ongoing battle on the evening news. One of the most intense and savage battles of the Vietnam conflict, it was televised every evening for almost a month. Although the battle for Hue was a tactical victory for the US, the North Vietnamese clearly achieved strategic success by searing the American consciousness with the high costs of urban warfare. Had US leaders made winning the information war a central part of the overall campaign plan—for example, exposing the American people to the NVA's brutality by publicizing the civilian executions in Hue—civilian support for the war may have been bolstered and a different outcome achieved. See Chapter 6 for a more detailed account of the battle for Hue.

MANIPULATE KEY FACILITIES

3-27. Threat forces will attempt to identify and quickly seize control of critical components of the urban area to help shape the battlespace. Urban telephone exchanges, for example, provide simple and reliable communications that can be easily secured with off-the-shelf technologies. Sewage treatment plants and flood control machinery can be used to implement WMD strategies or to make sections of the urban area uninhabitable. Media stations significantly improve the information operations abilities of the controlling force. Power generation and transmission sites provide means to control significant aspects of civilian society over a large area.

USE ALL DIMENSIONS

3-28. Threats will think and operate throughout the depth, breadth, and height (including supersurface and subsurface areas) of the urban environment. Conventional lateral boundaries will often not apply as threat forces control some stories of the same building while friendly forces control others.

3-29. Intrasurface areas and roofs provide urban threats with excellent observation points and battle positions above the maximum elevation of many weapons. Shots from upper floors strike armored vehicles in vulnerable points. Basements and other subsurface areas also provide firing points below many weapons' minimum depressions and strike at another weakness in most armor. Sewers and subways may provide covered and concealed access throughout the area of operations.

EMPLOY URBAN-ORIENTED WEAPONS

3-30. Whether purpose-built or adapted, many weapons are more useful in an urban environment while others may have significant disadvantages. Urban threat weapons are much like the nature of urbanization and the urban environment: inventive and varied. Many threats will integrate widely available off-the-shelf technologies into their weapon systems and armed forces. However, sniper rifles and small, man-portable, fire-and-forget weapons and demolitions and other improvised explosive devices will likely dominate the urban environment. Figure 3-3 lists examples of threat weapons favored in UO.

ENGAGE ENTIRE ENEMY FORCE

3-31. Threats may attempt to keep all or significant portions of Army forces engaged in continuous operations to increase their susceptibility to stress-induced illnesses. UO, by their nature, produce an inordinate number of combat-stress casualties. Continuous operations exacerbate this problem. Threat forces that employ this tactic will often maintain a large reserve to minimize the psychological impacts on their own forces.

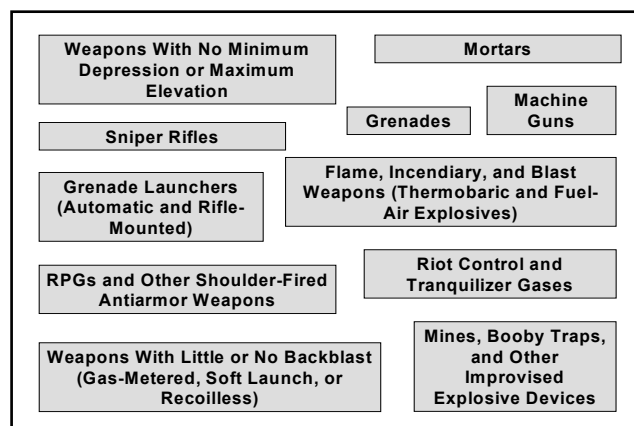


Figure 3-3. Favored Threat Weapons

3-32. To accomplish this, threat UO will likely involve decentralized maneuver, precision fires, and simultaneous operations involving unconventional and special purpose forces. Threat forces will take advantage of any exposed weakness and engage in battles as opportunities present themselves.

FOCUS ATTACKS ON SUPPORT AREAS, ISOLATED GROUPS, AND INDIVIDUALS

3-33. To supplement the previous tactic, threat forces will seek to target support areas, small groups, leaders and their headquarters, and individual soldiers. Their focus on resupply, casualty evacuation, and other sustainment activities, coupled with the compartmented terrain, navigational challenges, and multiple three-dimensional avenues of approach often makes these locations and soldiers more susceptible to surprise raids and ambushes. Attacks on these areas and groups are conducted to erode the Army's ability to sustain UO, to inflict maximum casualties, and to induce psychological stress. These attacks can be mitigated by careful, regular evaluation of choke points and other restrictive terrain, regular awareness training for units and individuals operating in or transiting through potential incident-prone areas, and thorough after-action analysis of incidents.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF URBANIZATION

3-34. Many urban areas are the engines for increased industrialism and economic growth as an expanding population provides the labor for manufacturing and service needs. However, rapid and inadequately planned growth can result in undesirable consequences. Uncontrolled urbanization may result in an infrastructure and economic base unable to support the growing population. A large transient, ill-housed, and idle population in a close geographic space may produce strife. Classes, cultures, ethnic groups, and races that might otherwise peacefully coexist can clash under the stress of survival. Uncontrolled urban growth has resulted in the negative effects listed in Figure 3-4 on page 3-12. *In many urban stability operations and support operations, these may be the primary "threats" to mission accomplishment.*

3-35. Not all urban areas prevail as inherently unstable or hotbeds for unrest. Urban growth due to migration may remove sources of conflict, or it may provide the catalyst for violence. Commanders recognize the possible effects of uncontrolled urbanization. During their intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB), they determine if

these conditions exist. Throughout mission analysis and the development of courses of action, commanders consider the impact (if any) on their operations. At the same time, they recognize that UO may *create* similar problems that may affect the current operation as well as the overall campaign.

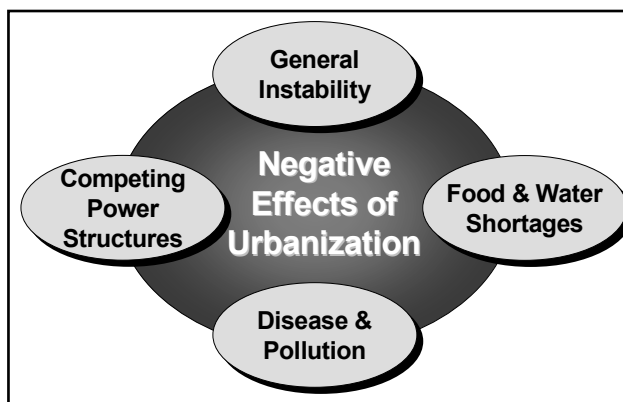


Figure 3-4. Negative Effects of Urbanization

GENERAL INSTABILITY

3-36. Urbanization can enhance stability by generating industrialization and economic growth resulting in more jobs, a higher overall standard of living, and an educated, relatively satisfied populace. However, the population dynamics associated with urbanization can also have an opposite, destabilizing effect. Radical population growth may create overcrowding and generate or aggravate resource and quality of life issues. Intense and destructive competition for employment, housing, and social status may develop in this climate of economic deprivation. The inability of some governments to handle these problems—

- Makes their urban areas potential sources of unrest.
- Increases the likelihood of the Army's involvement in stability operations and support operations.
- Complicates operations conducted in such an urban environment.

Weak civil administrations have difficulty controlling their society, safeguarding their military armaments, and preventing their urban areas from serving as sanctuaries to terrorists and criminal organizations.

3-37. Urbanization in developing countries warrants more concern. Their resources necessary for urban growth are scarce and the rate of urbanization disproportionately large. Between 1970 and 1993, the urban population of developed countries grew by 208 million compared to 910 million in the developing countries of the world. Over the next two decades, developing countries are projected to gain another 1.6 billion inhabitants, 72 percent more than in the previous two decades. Figure 3-5 graphically portrays the widening demographic differences between the developed and developing regions. Each day, over 160,000 people in these developing nations migrate to urban areas. By 2015, 24 of the 30 largest urban areas may exist in the developing world. Intense migration and growth, coupled with the forced closeness of people once separated by the rural countryside, may stress

already struggling institutions, hasten conflict, and lead to overall instability. Commanders understand that UO, depending on the operation, may either cause massive population movement out of or into urban areas.

3-38. Urban areas with a large youth

population may also help to generate conditions for instability. Rural-to-urban migrants tend to be relatively young. In 1999, Cairo, for example, had more than 40 percent of its population younger than 15 years. Young urban populations generate enormous demands for social resources, primarily education and jobs. Even a strong urban economy may fold under the economic expectations of a tremendous influx of young migrants. Disorder and violence may result as hostiles (many nonstate actors) easily mobilize and manipulate the idle young to act politically and criminally. Urbanization and population growth are more dangerous when they combine to produce a cohort of young urban dwellers separated from traditional social controls, such as village elders and clan leaders.

3-39. Ethnic, religious, and other social issues may become the vents for anger and frustration produced by the high tension of urban life. Major acts of violence and destruction, such as occurred in 1992 in India, can directly threaten a nation's security. Army forces may have to conduct large-scale, stability operations and support operations to promote peace and protect national interests. In these cases, all levels of command will be particularly concerned with maintaining impartiality and perceived legitimacy.

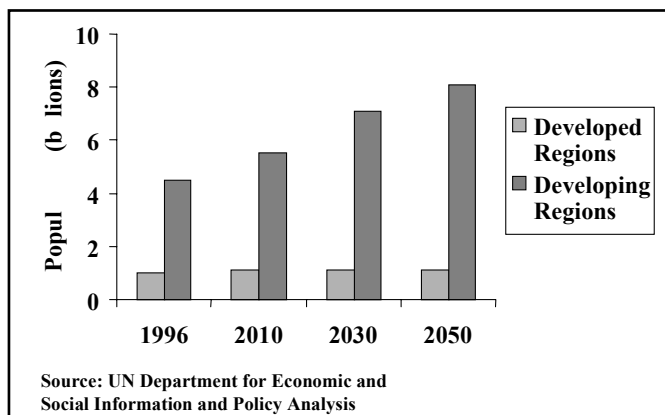


Figure 3-5. Worldwide Population Projections

Cultural and Religious Instability

The 1992 bombing of the Babri Masjid Mosque in Ayodhya, India, enflamed an already intense cultural and religious rivalry between Hindus and Muslims and led to rioting throughout many Indian urban areas. Of the 1,500 who died in conflicts and riots, almost 95 percent died in urban areas. The violence struck Ahmedabad and Bombay most seriously, with acts of murder, gang rapes, and arson occurring months after the destruction of the mosque.

FOOD AND WATER SHORTAGES

3-40. Rapid urbanization, primarily in developing nations, may lead to severe food shortages that could influence Army forces (or lead to their use). Such shortages may cause instability, massive migration, revolts, or increased support of armed opposition groups. Armed factions may target NGOs that supply aid as a means of furthering dissatisfaction among the populace. In effect, food may become a weapon. Deployed troops may need to

provide or support humanitarian food aid networks to keep the humanitarian situation from escalating.

3-41. Normally, commanders should use centralized feeding centers as a last resort. Instead, Army forces should bring the food closest to the population to encourage civilians to stay in their homes. If safe areas or camps are created, they should be designed for use over as short a time as is feasible. The general rule should be to return the urban population to their homes as soon as possible. Army forces conducting domestic support or foreign humanitarian assistance operations that cannot maintain the safe food supplies may find the frustrations and hostility of the local population focused on them.

3-42. Water shortages (and quality) are becoming a serious problem in many regions. Commanders operating in an urban environment need to know the water supply origins and its treatment, purification, distribution, and vulnerabilities. Before beginning operations, commanders must know if they are providing water for the noncombatants as well as their own forces. Across the range of operations, controlling and protecting a limited water supply is, or may become, an essential operational consideration during UO.

Food and Water Shortages

Countries as varied as Indonesia and Algeria exported their food surpluses only two generations ago but now import up to two-thirds of their basic staples. This cycle has resulted in many countries, which once exported agricultural products, facing the growing cost of imports to feed their urban populations. Estimates predict that by the 2010, at least 65 countries (including 30 of Africa's 51 countries) may depend completely on food imports. For some countries, it is even worse. Congo (Zaire), once a net food exporter, now faces mass starvation.

Over the last four decades in China, irrigated farmland has tripled and urban populations have quintupled. In Indonesia, urban areas such as Jakarta may use six times more water in 2005 as it did in 1990, and Indonesia currently has limited capability to meet this increased demand.

DISEASE AND POLLUTION

3-43. Urban areas frequently spawn epidemics; therefore, widespread disease may pose a significant threat to Army forces that operate there. In many developing nations, rapid urbanization has occurred without a corresponding upgrade, expansion, or even development of adequate sewage and water systems. Some urban areas have only one toilet for every 750 people or more. In these areas, hundreds of thousands live much as they would in poor villages, yet so confined as to ensure high transmission rates for airborne, waterborne, sexually transmitted, and contact-transmitted microbes.

3-44. In urban areas lacking adequate trash and waste management infrastructure, insect-spread diseases proliferate. Mosquitoes that breed in polluted water, open water tanks, and irrigated urban gardens carry malaria and dengue fever—the leading causes of sickness and death from infectious disease in Latin America and Africa. The problem compounds with growing numbers of bacteria resistant to various antibiotics, a shortage of trained

medical personnel, inadequate or insufficient medical facilities and supplies, and unclean agricultural and food-processing practices.

3-45. Pollution also creates critical health problems in developing areas and a potential health risk for intervening Army forces. Urban areas in China have recorded five to ten times the levels of sulfur dioxide found in the air of urban areas in the developed world. In parts of Poland, toxic waste has so polluted the land and water that ten percent of the babies have birth defects. Pollution may cause immediate health problems but more often, the insidious effects appear months or years after exposure. As discussed earlier, UO may contribute, either intentionally or unintentionally, to an increase in pollution. Destruction of industrial complexes that use, produce, and store hazardous material may produce toxic gas and smoke pollutants that contributed to significant health concerns to exposed soldiers.

3-46. Commanders initiate combat health support (CHS) planning early, including analysis of the medical threat and other critical medical information requirements during the IPB process. A medical surveillance system monitors the daily status of Army personnel throughout the operation. In preparation, all personnel receive a predeployment medical examination. This exam establishes an accurate baseline health status of the force and ensures that Army forces do not introduce new diseases to an urban area, possibly exacerbating the situation. Conversely, soldiers not immune to native viruses or possessing a weakened immune system due to continuous operations and the stress associated with UO may put Army forces at a significant disadvantage. An outbreak of plague during an operation would have an effect similar to a chemical or biological attack. The closer that Army forces operate to civilians (the humanitarian assistance operations conducted in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and Mogadishu, Somalia, for example), the more probable that these situations may occur. See Chapter 9 for further CHS considerations.

COMPETING POWER STRUCTURES

3-47. Many groups can exist that become strong enough to rival the power of the governing officials and eventually turn the urban area into a system of divergent and competing power structures. These groups can consist of insurgent forces, a merchant class or an economic elite, criminal organizations, or some other significant source of power such as religious organizations, clans, or tribes. In the absence of a legitimate authority, armed factions headed by “warlords” may vie to fill the power void. Sometimes these groups or organizations, normally at odds with each other, may form alliances to achieve specific goals. Commanders recognize, identify, and understand these alternate urban power bases and, if necessary, develop engagement strategies to neutralize or harness them to accomplish the Army mission.

Urban Insurgencies

3-48. As urban migration increases in the developing world, rural guerrillas appear to follow. This transition of insurgencies from rural to urban areas occurs because urban areas offer a rich field of targets for insurgent attacks. People immediately notice any disruption of urban infrastructure, thus having great propaganda value. A concentrated urban population is often more susceptible to propaganda and political organization. Insurgents can

easily arrange mass demonstrations using available communications facilities, both overt and covert. Travel is effortless and large urban populations provide cover and concealment. On the whole, urban areas may provide a fertile environment for guerrillas to apply their rural insurgent strategies. However, even with a rural-based insurgency, operations in urban areas offer distinct opportunities to disrupt, discredit, and demoralize the government (see FM 3-05.20 and FM 3-07).

Urban Insurgencies

In Africa, a strategy of capturing urban areas, while trapping government forces within others, has become a common tactic of insurgent forces. Similarly, insurgents in Liberia concentrated their efforts in the capital city of Monrovia while guerrillas in Sierra Leone have battled the government repeatedly for the urban diamond mining hubs. Even Shiite rebels in Afghanistan took their conflict with the government into the heart of Kabul, the capital.

Merchant Class

3-49. Urban areas normally possess a merchant class or an economic elite as part of their social structure. In some urban areas, they may carry more power than the local or central state government. They may isolate themselves physically and socially from the sprawling poor yet wield enormous power over the country's political and economic activities. The degree of economic separation between the merchant class and the poor may be small but still socially or politically significant.

3-50. In a vastly impoverished area where the economy of the urban area is severely disrupted, the merchant class will often continue to operate and function and, as a result, achieve a measure of influence. To continue to operate under acute economic turmoil, they may form alliances in criminal organizations and secure loyalties within the government. Outside resources introduced into a crisis area (such as food, water, fuel, and pharmaceuticals) take on increased value, may replace currency as the medium for exchange, and often become the means to amass and hold wealth. One of the primary ways to obtain wealth may be to steal it.

3-51. In some turbulent situations that lead to the need for stability operations or support operations, commanders may harness the power of the merchant class as a force for peace and stability instead of one that uses crime to achieve economic goals. For example, in a relief situation, instead of competing with the merchant class by distributing food directly to the needy and possibly creating an environment of looting and black marketeering, it may be possible to monetize food. Food assistance from donor governments could be sold to merchants at an attractive price so they have a reliable source of supply. This could, in turn, create a healthy economic system and separate merchants from criminals and gangs.

Criminal Organizations

3-52. Organized criminal groups have grown common in urban areas; have also become an important part of the urban social structure (gangs for example); and can exert considerable influence on governments, people, and

military forces conducting UO. Some large criminal organizations relying on international connections often have better resources and equipment than their insurgent counterparts. Their large financial resources, long-reaching connections, and ruthlessness provide them the means to corrupt or intimidate local officials and government institutions. In any operation, but especially support operations, they may violently confront and oppose Army forces during mission execution.

3-53. The tactics of urban criminal groups parallel those of insurgents. They have developed an intuitive cultural understanding of slum neighborhoods and the ability to lure civilians into criminal activities. They have also mastered the management of mobs. They recruit teenagers and young adults in their efforts against rivals and authorities, just as insurgents muster armies from the youth of rural villages. In many developing nations, there exists an alliance between insurgents and organized criminal groups. In these alliances, the insurgents defend the criminals and the criminals fund the insurgents. During many UO, particularly during or following combat, civil disturbances, or large natural disasters, looting (organized or unorganized) may become of critical concern. Therefore, UO may often require a combined law enforcement and military response.

Crime and Criminal Organizations

Crime and poverty plague urban areas such as Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's second largest urban area and would affect military operations conducted in their limits. Rio has some of the nation's highest negative urban indicators: the largest number of slum dwellers (1 million), the highest murder rate (1 of 700 residents per year), and the highest kidnapping rate (4 per week). In 1989, the homicide rate of the urban area was three times higher than New York City's and the rate of urban violence continues to rise. Therefore, law enforcement management may be a critical issue for Army forces operating in urban environments similar to that of Rio de Janeiro.

However, criminal elements or organizations may not always work against Army commanders. They can be co-opted or influenced to serve friendly objectives. For example, during World War II the US Navy worked covertly with the Mafia in New York City to secure the New York harbor from German U-boats believed to be torpedoing ships there. The Mafia controlled most dock activities New York harbor and was perfectly positioned to monitor other subversive waterfront activity. This capability provided needed information to the Navy for its counterintelligence and security tasks. New York civil authorities therefore agreed to permit a Navy-Mafia alliance to operate at the port for the greater good of the country. Although the Mafia was not the preferred ally of the Navy, it had the capability to protect US ships and the interest (patriotism) to help in the war effort. In those circumstances, the temporary alliance worked (see also the civilian threat discussion in Appendix B).

Warlords

3-54. A characteristic of many recent stability operations and support operations has been the deterioration or complete collapse of political authority in the country or urban area in crisis. In some cases, warlords have attempted

to fill the power vacuum (see Appendix C for an example). These individuals often have no particular claim to legitimacy. Their power issues from their weapons, not necessarily from their political skills, human services provided, or popular consent (although they have *some* popular support to remain in their relative position of authority). In dealing with these urban warlords during support operations or stability operations, it may appear that there are two options: either ignore them completely or work with them visibly or regularly. Commanders may reduce some of the greater risks involved in these extremes by adopting a middle-ground approach. Nevertheless, the technique chosen must clearly support political and military objectives.

3-55. Refusal to acknowledge warlords may increase the threat to Army forces and NGOs. Their militias may attack Army forces to achieve recognition or simply due to misunderstanding or inherent friction between armed forces. On the other hand, dealing with them may provide legitimacy to the exclusion of other elements of the urban population such as professional groups (for example, doctors or teachers), religious groups, and traditional clan or tribal chiefs—which may have a greater claim to legitimacy and better form the foundation for a reconstituted urban society.

3-56. A compromise between these two extremes may offer the best chance for success. Commanders generally recognize these warlords or they risk incidents; however, this recognition can be kept at staff levels to avoid bestowing any legitimacy on them. Instead, commanders themselves visibly meet the other elements of society that have a more legitimate claim to political, social, or economic leadership. Inevitably, commanders may need to meet with warlords. In those circumstances, clan or tribal elders, and others who represent traditional authority should attend and commanders should ask for, and give deliberate consideration to, their opinions.